Canis Familiaris

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Canis Familiaris

by Not_You

Summary

In which Will and Hannibal go to that puppy play event mentioned in Airs Above The Ground.

Chapter 1

A few mornings after the night Will watched his neurologist prance around in hoof boots, Hannibal's dear friend Gretchen Speck sends the photos she promised him, along with an announcement for an upcoming puppy play event. The message shows up while he's at work, and by the time he's home and can actually look at them, he's so eager to do it that he doesn't even take off his tie. Hannibal is deeply amused, of course, and almost as curious, since a quick search through his own pictures has yielded nothing.

Gretchen really is a good photographer. Each of the images is well balanced, and perfectly capture the scene. Will knows that Hannibal has a good arm, and his form as he lashes Francis really is elegant. Francis is enormous and chiseled, and has the look of some large predator made helpless, like a drugged tiger. He kneels on the stage with his hooded head bowed, and Will actually shivers at how obviously every line of his body craves the pain.

"She really is talented, isn't she?" Hannibal asks, leaning on the back of Will's chair, the better to watch as he clicks through the photos.

"Shit, so are you," Will says, and Hannibal kisses his neck.

"You say the loveliest things," he coos, and then looks at the screen again. "Oh, there's Reba," he says, gesturing to the woman standing to one side, visible from a new angle. She's on the small side of average, with shoulder-length hair in waves. She's wearing gold, and it makes her brown skin glow.

"Wow," Will says, and then, "I thought you said he wears bells."

"He takes most of them off for impact play. If you look more closely, you can see that there are still some around his neck and wrists." Hannibal is right, and Will smiles, clicking forward.

"God, look at you go."

"He wanted a lot," Hannibal says. "Would you mind if I did it again sometime?"

"Something like this, I'd only be pissed if I didn't get to watch, but I'd want to know about it."

"I'll bear that in mind," Hannibal says. Will clicks to the next image, and he laughs. "It was Femdom Friday, and I have the greatest respect for Reba," Hannibal says, as an explanation for this picture of him kneeling at her feet, respectfully offering the flogger to her handle-first.

Will squirms a little. "I know I should go sometime," he says, "but I think I need to do some other events as a warm up."

"Like that one?" Hannibal asks, as Will closes the images, revealing the flyer in his inbox.

"Yeah, probably," Will says, feeling a little flushed. "You wanna come with me?"

"I would be delighted," Hannibal says.

That Friday, Will isn't sure if he's more excited or nervous as they pull into the Asylum's parking lot, but he's definitely wired. Hannibal is much calmer, and Will tries to leech that off of him. Inside, the dance floor is set up for rally obedience, and Will catches sight of Mischa talking to a tall and elegant-looking black man. His hair is cropped too close to curl, and his eyes remind Will of a snake's. He's beautiful and vaguely familiar, but also kind of off-putting. Not enough to explain Hannibal's sudden grimace and automatic shift out of his line of sight.

"What is it?" Will asks, changing course to reach the side bar, staying between Hannibal and his sister's friend, who seems too intent upon the conversation to notice him anyway. Hannibal's movements don't quite match those of a man avoiding his ex, and as far as Will knows, Hannibal can meet his former lovers with equanimity.

"It's not him so much as who he almost certainly brings with him," Hannibal hisses, and then jumps like a scalded cat when he turns and sees Franklyn on the bar stool next to him. The man smiles and blushes in a way that makes Will want to wrap him up in a blanket, and Hannibal sighs.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Lecter," the man says, and he does sound genuinely contrite. "Should I pretend not to know you?"

Hannibal sighs. "No, that's for your comfort, not mine." He glances over his shoulder where Mischa is still talking. "I trust that you and Tobias are well?"

"We are," Franklyn says, looking so giddy and transported that Will has to smile.

"Wonderful."

"Hi, Will!" Franklyn adds, leaning around Hannibal to wave to Will.

Will smiles. "Hi, Franklyn. That's Tobias talking to Mischa, right? I thought I had seen him somewhere before."

Franklyn blushes badly, glancing over at them and back to Will. "He wanted to talk shop with her."

"Mischa has trained many real dogs in her time, it's true," Hannibal says, and Franklyn's flush deepens. "So has Will."

Will is proud of himself when he doesn't blush, and Franklyn is deeply relieved by the arrival of the bartender. "What are you two drinking?" Franklyn asks.

"Come now, I can't have you buying my drinks," Hannibal says, and Franklyn laughs.

"Hey, it's the least I can do for being here and making it awkward. What about you, Will?"

"...Whiskey on the rocks."

"You seemed like that kind of guy," he says, and Hannibal submits to a gin and tonic, because the Asylum carries some delightful local distillate that he knows all about, of course.

Chapter 2

It's not as awkward to be in this situation with Franklyn as it would have been even six weeks ago, and Hannibal is proud of his own good work, seeing his patient so calm and confident. Some of it is surely Tobias's influence, but it can't all be. Looking closer, Hannibal can see that Franklyn is wearing a simple, black collar with a single D-ring at the front. Franklyn feels his gaze, and puts a self-conscious and happy hand on it.

"Tobias wanted something tasteful," he says shyly, and Hannibal smiles.

"It is tasteful, Franklyn. It suits you."

"Thank you," he says softly, and then perks up very much like a dog at the sound of his master's voice as Tobias comes up to the bar.

Tobias greets Hannibal and Will politely, putting an easy and possessive arm around Franklyn, who blushes a little and looks delighted to be alive. They're here to learn, and as such, are very interested when Mischa comes over to talk to Will about possibly filling in for a missing judge.

"Am I early enough?" he asks, and Mischa nods.

"You are, if we get moving."

"Can we come with you?" Franklyn asks, as Will drains his drink and prepares to follow Mischa.

"I don't mind," Will says, with one of his twitchy shrugs.

"Nor do I," Mischa adds, and just leans over to kiss Hannibal's cheek before leading the group away. It's a light, warm touch that stays on his skin, and he smiles as he finishes his drink. Near the last sip, he feels someone approaching, and looks around to see Francis, in his usual leather hood, collar, boots, and bells. Tonight he also has a leash, and a short vest with 'guide dog' printed on the back in block letters. Reba holds the end of the leash, and smiles when Francis stops and slightly turns toward Hannibal, to let Reba know that a friend is in that seat.

"Hello?" she says, taking the empty one beside him.

"Good evening, Reba," he says, and smiles down at Francis, where he kneels at Reba's feet. "And Francis." Hannibal doesn't pet him, because guide dogs need to concentrate.

"I thought you didn't usually come to these things, Hannibal," Reba says, and he chuckles.

"I don't," he says, "but Will wanted to come."

"Gretchen mentioned that you were finally seeing someone again."

"I am, and now my sister has stolen him to help judge the rally."

"Poor darling," Reba coos, and finds his hand to pat it comfortingly.

Hannibal chuckles. "What are you and Francis drinking?"

"G and T for me, just the tonic for Francis."

Francis has never gotten into alcohol, preferring instead to smoke copious amounts of marijuana. Hannibal can smell it on him now, but it's not unpleasant or even very strong. The bartender mixes Reba's drink and then simply gives her a can of tonic water, which she passes down to Francis. Puppies don't have hands, but Reba prefers to let Francis use his. It's more convenient. Now he sips his tonic and listens to the conversation, resting his head against Reba's calf. So far Francis is too shy to actually compete, but Reba can explain rally obedience to Hannibal. It sounds interesting, and knowing that Will has to help design the course explains his sudden exit.

Soon, Hannibal moves to take a better vantage point, and Reba and Francis move with him, so that Francis will be able to describe the action for Reba. From their current table they can see everything quite well, including the judges's table, where Will is sitting with his chin in his hands, watching handlers and dogs get ready to work. Just as in real obedience and agility trials, all breeds are allowed. There are people in full dog suits, and every gradation between those and people like Francis, who haven't even put on a pair of ears. Hannibal wonders which setup Will would prefer, were they ever to do this. Probably something fairly minimalist.

Once the rally begins, Hannibal stays quiet so that Reba can hear Francis's descriptions. He speaks slowly and clearly, and has an excellent eye for detail. Hannibal half-listens to him, attention trained on Will. who's so adorably straight-faced and professional about judging the human pups that Hannibal can hardly bear it. He takes everyone seriously, including the man in the hot pink poodle suit. Will himself looks hilariously normal next to his fetish wear clad colleagues, and Hannibal loves him so much that it hurts.

Chapter 3

Will is on the fringe of most canine sports, too dysfunctional to be one of those nice, friendly people who go for coffee with the whole obedience class, too invested in the pack's well-being to keep any member of it from a fun and salubrious activity. Of all the various options, rally is his personal favorite. He likes going at the dog's pace, and it's always so satisfying to signal a dog and be understood. Sometimes he thinks that that's the real addictive thing, hunting companions and cute puppies be damned, that the thrill of communicating so clearly with an alien mind is the real engine of domestication.

Watching a bunch of humans in dog drag go through their paces, Will tries to work out the appeal, and eventually decides that it's sympathetic magic, an attempt to be as much in the moment, as devoted and abject, as a real dog. Will can get into probably any kink at all. He hasn't dared to try himself with things he finds disgusting, afraid of being genuinely converted, and holds his mind a little aloof now. Instead of any real arousal, what he feels is an aching tenderness for the overthinking and hideously imperfect creatures that humans are, and all their little efforts to be anything else.

Of course, Will is also keeping a sharp watch for performance of all assigned tasks. The course is modified for humans, since some of the most difficult exercises for dogs are ridiculously easy for humans. The signaling rules are also inverted, with only gestures allowed, so it would be more like canine dressage in real dogs. Verbal signals are much too easy for humans. It creates an odd hush, even with the constant murmur of the crowd, who keep it low to avoid distraction.

Between teams, Will watches Tobias and Franklyn. They're such an odd couple, and yet there's a weird feeling of inevitability about them. They're seated in one of the minimalist booths, Franklyn leaning on Tobias, who has one arm around him and the forefinger of the other hand hooked through the ring of his collar. They seem to be deep in conversation, and now Will glances up and idly wonders just how red a man can get before his head explodes, because Franklyn has to be close to it. Tobias murmurs something into his ear and kisses his cheek, and Franklyn hides his face in Tobias's shoulder.

The placing system is the same as at a real rally event, and Will is glad to dump his scores in to be averaged and escape, leaving someone else to distribute blue, red, yellow, and white ribbons. Hannibal is waiting for him at the edge of the dance floor, looking profoundly amused. Will snorts, and takes his arm.

"I've done my civic duty," he says, "and I need another drink."

Hannibal leads him a booth of their own, where Reba sits with Francis at her feet. It feels really weird to have seen photos of them before meeting them, but Will reminds himself that it's really no weirder than meeting the model after seeing some artistic nude photography. Not that that wouldn't be a bit uncomfortable, but it would be manageable, and so is this. Hannibal introduces him, and Reba extends her hand. He shakes it and then sits down beside her. Hannibal joins them, and flags down a waiter, ordering for the table. Plain tonic for

Francis, which strikes Will as funny, since most of the dogs he has met will take beer or wine if it's left out.

"Can I pet your dog?" he asks Reba, and she smiles.

"You can," she says, and unclips Francis's leash, making it into a neat roll and setting it on the table at her left hand. Like a real guide dog, Francis's sense of being off-duty is immediate. He turns his hooded head up to Will, and gives a happy little wriggle, very expressive even without ears or a mouth.

Will smiles, and strokes the leather hood, and finds himself murmuring, "You're a good boy, aren't you, Francis?" just as he would to a real dog. Francis wriggles again, and leans into Will's leg. Will strokes Francis's back and shoulders as well, admiring his elaborate tattoo. He really is gorgeous. His beauty and that of a large and powerful dog have a significant overlap, and Will smiles at the thought.

When the drinks arrive, Reba has her gin and tonic and Francis's can of tonic set at her right hand. She opens the can and carefully feeds Francis a few sips before tasting her own drink, like a responsible pet owner. She smiles when Will tells her so, and pets Francis.

"I do my best to take good care of him," she says, and Francis makes a little affirmative noise like a dog's bark, shifting from Will’s knee to lean on hers.

Chapter 4

Hannibal is pleased to see Will getting along with his friends, and a bit less pleased an hour later, as Franklyn catches Will on their way out. Will doesn't look distressed, however, so Hannibal hangs back, waiting for him to wrap it up. Tobias is doing the same, and catches Hannibal's eye, nodding to him. Hannibal barely inclines his head in return. Thankfully, Franklyn's brevity and sense of boundaries are both much improved these days, and a moment later Will comes to join Hannibal, looking much more amused than harassed.

In the car, Hannibal asks about their conversation, and Will laughs. "I have my own pervert cub to den-mother now," he says.

"Franklyn is asking you for advice?"

"Strictly advice on how to be a good dog. He really is trying to respect your need to keep the relationship professional, but I have relevant knowledge. And I guess I seem more approachable than the six foot tall woman in leather."

"Hilda is a very sweet girl," Hannibal says, because it's true, and Will just laughs again.

"Mischa is your baby sister, you're probably immune to the effect."

"Perhaps," Hannibal says.

"It's kinda sweet, I guess. If Tobias takes care of him, anyway."

"Well, you can ask pointed questions about his care, now."

Back at Will's house, almost more home than his own, now, Hannibal makes open-faced baguette sandwiches under the broiler, since dinner was a while ago. Will lets the dogs out and then back again, settling onto the bed with them piled around him. Hannibal had asked Will once, why the bed is where it is, and he had laughed sheepishly and admitted that by the time he knew anyone in the area well enough to get help hauling it upstairs, it had started to feel right where it was.

Now Hannibal goes to join Will while cheese melts and onions caramelize, pressing a kiss to his stubbly cheek and then to his mouth when he turns to greet it. He sighs, and leans into Hannibal. These days, Hannibal has a very good sense of Will's moods, and what they do to his body. He's a little heavy now, relaxed and a little sleepy in Hannibal's arms, and Hannibal really wants to haul him into his lap, but things burn quickly under a broiler. Sure enough, by the time he has extricated himself, both sandwiches are extremely brown. They're not actually burned yet, though, and Hannibal can plate them and serve one to Will without embarrassment. As always, it's a pleasure to watch him eat. He has a wonderful appreciation of food for someone who doesn't cook, and takes his time over textures and tastes.

After their late and casual dinner, Will washes the dishes while Hannibal moves through his nightly routine, which now includes pauses to let the dogs out and then back in again. He

doesn't mind being trained for Will, and he says so even later, when both of them are curled up together in Will's bed.

Will groans. "Here I was, about to fall asleep..."

Hannibal reaches around him, chuckling to find him hard. "And here I thought you didn't like pet play."

"I don't," Will mumbles, pressing forward into Hannibal's hand and tipping his head back against Hannibal's shoulder. He interrupts himself with a little moan as Hannibal squeezes him, his grip slow and firm. "I don't," he says when he can speak again, "but I like the thought of training you."

"It's too bad that I already know how to take a fist."

"And to swallow a whole cock," Will adds, breathless as Hannibal keeps working him.

"Indeed," Hannibal says, and pushes his cock between Will's legs, the tip nudging at his balls.

Will whimpers and gets the idea immediately, closing his thighs on Hannibal and panting harshly as Hannibal strokes him in counterpoint to the way they rock together. Hannibal loves his breathing like this, and puts his other hand around Will's throat, to feel it better. Will whines and pushes into that hand, too, and Hannibal loves him so much that it's painful. He says so, in Lithuanian, and bites the edge of Will's ear when he comes, shaking and silent. Hannibal kisses the back of Will's neck and shifts his hips down a little, to keep grinding without hurting Will's oversensitive cock. Will shudders and lets him, taking Hannibal's hand from around his throat to suck on the fingers, purring as Hannibal moans quietly and comes all over him.

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